IN THE CLAIMS

Claims

1. (WITHDRAWN)

2. (WITHDRAWN)

3. (WITHDRAWN)

4. (WITHDRAWN)

5. (WITHDRAWN)

6. (WITHDRAWN)

7. (WITHDRAWN)

8. (WITHDRAWN)

9. (WITHDRAWN)

10. (WITHDRAWN)

11. (WITHDRAWN)

12. (WITHDRAWN)

13. (WITHDRAWN)

14. (WITHDRAWN)

15. (WITHDRAWN)

16. (WITHDRAWN)

17. (WITHDRAWN)

18. (WITHDRAWN)

19. (WITHDRAWN)

20. (WITHDRAWN)

21. (WITHDRAWN)

22. (WITHDRAWN)

23. (WITHDRAWN)

24. (WITHDRAWN)

25. (WITHDRAWN)

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing density-controlled beads dispersible in a liquid medium for incorporation into cosmetic products, with the beads comprising as bead material ingredients: (i) an active agent; (ii) an effective quantity of a density-reducing largely impermeable agent to promote uniform dispersion in the liquid medium by providing the bead with a desired bulk density; and ~~each according to claim 5, the gel beads being formed of~~ (iii) a bead material that is liquid at elevated temperatures, the method comprising (a) admixing bead material ingredients at an elevated temperature; (b) forming the resultant mixture into droplets or globules; ~~and~~ (c) cooling the droplets or globules to form beads; and (d) ~~the method comprising including in the bead material ingredients a density-control agent~~ avoiding substantial absorption of other bead ingredients into said density-reducing agent by using a density reducing agent that is substantially impermeable to other bead ingredients in a quantity sufficient to provide a desired gel bead density.

27. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 26 comprising the elements of:

a) dissolving a water soluble gelling agent, optionally agar, in water heated to a first temperature sufficient to dissolve the gelling agent, in a proportion of gel to water effective to form a gel at a lower temperature than the elevated temperature to form a first mixture;

b) dispersing a density-control agent in water or oil at room temperature to form a second mixture;

(c) adding the second mixture to the first mixture to form a third mixture and then cooling the third mixture to an intermediate temperature above the gelling point of the first mixture; and

(d) discharging the cooled third mixture through a needle to form drops; and

(e) exposing the drops to a hydrophobic liquid maintained at a temperature below the first mixture's gelling point, whereby the drops are formed into gel beads incorporating the density-reducing agent.

28. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method according to claim 29 wherein the gel beads have an average particle diameter of from about 0.1 mm to 10 ~~num~~mm.

29. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein the first temperature is about 90°C.

30. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein a water-soluble restraining polymer is included in the gel beads.

31. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 30 wherein an active agent is added to the second mixture before adding the second mixture to the third mixture.

32. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method according to claim 31 wherein the restraining polymer <u>used</u> has a molecular weight of at least 50,000 daltons and is

effective to prevent egress of the restraining polymer from the gel, the restraining polymer having retention groups to bind the active agent to the restraining polymer for retention in the gel beads, being present in a proportion effective to deliver an effective amount of the active agent and being selected from the group consisting of polyquaternium 11, polyquaternium 24, laurdimonium hydroxyethylcellulose, cocodimonium hydroxyethylcellulose, steardimonium hydroxyethylcellulose, quaternary ammonium substituted water-soluble polysaccharides, alkyl quaternary celluloses and polypeptides having or provided with retention groups to retain the active agent.

33. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 32 wherein the gel particles are manually crushable on the skin to increase the surface area of the gel particles and expose the restraining polymer to a topical body surface for release of the active agent.

34. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 32 wherein the restraining polymer comprises about 0.2 to about 7.5% of the gel particles.

35. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein the intermediate temperature is about 45°C.

36. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein the density-control agent is pre-dispersed in oil.

37. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 comprising admixing an active agent in with the gel bead material ingredients whereby the active agent is incorporated in the gel beads.

38. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein the density-control agent comprises heat-expandable microspheres.

39. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 comprising pre-dispersing a pigment in water and mixing the pre-dispersed pigment with the second mixture before adding the second mixture to the third mixture.

40. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein the gelling agent comprises about 1.5% of the gel-particles.

41. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein the density-control agent comprising about 0.01% to about 5% of the gel particles.

42. (ORIGINAL) A method according to claim 27 wherein the density-control agent comprises about 0.02% to about 0.1% of the gel particles.

43. (WITHDRAWN)

44. (WITHDRAWN)

45. (WITHDRAWN)

46. (NEW) A method according to claim 27 wherein the plurality of hollow particles used are non-porous and do not substantially absorb oil.

47. (NEW) A method according to claim 27 wherein the plurality of hollow particles used are gas-filled thermoplastic microspheres.

48. (NEW) A method as in claim 47, wherein the hollow particles used have a singe gas bubble.

49. (NEW) A method according to claim 26, wherein the density-reducing agent is dispersed in a quantity sufficient to give the particles a bulk density of from about 0.8 g/ml to about 0.1 g/ml.

50. (NEW) A method according to claim 26, wherein the density-reducing agent is dispersed in a quantity sufficient to give the particles a bulk density less than or equal to the liquid medium.

51. (NEW) A method as in claim 26, wherein the density control agent used comprises hollow particles.

52. (NEW) A method as in claim 27, wherein the density control agent used comprises hollow particles.